



## COUNCILMEMBER CARL DeMAIO


FIFTH DISTRICT  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 5, 2009

TO: City Council President Ben Hueso

CC: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Councilmember Carl DeMaio 

RE: Request for Docketing: Downtown Library Proposal

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Our entire City Council has been united in strong support for our neighborhood branch libraries – particularly in opposing any reductions in library hours. I am growing increasingly concerned about the distraction and financial threat to our branch libraries posed by the languishing proposal for building a new Downtown Library.

In 2002 the City Council signed off on a questionable plan to build a 9-story 300,000 square-foot new downtown library – on the promise that the project was to have no impact to the City's General Fund and to be financed by roughly \$50 million in private donations. Now almost seven years later – and after millions having been spent on direct expenditures from the City's Redevelopment Agency and unknown funds being spent on city library staff time – we are no closer to finishing the project.

I am concerned that this project has exceeded the original legislative authorization granted by the City Council in 2002. Project boosters have failed to raise the funds they promised. What's worse, the project has now deviated significantly from the original plan as approved by the City Council – in terms of timeline and design (e.g. inclusion of a school at the site.)

In April my office provided the Mayor and City Council with a report that updated the construction costs and annual operating costs of the library if built. (See attached) I am concerned that the project if pursued will undermine the financial bandwidth of the city – and put funding for neighborhood branch libraries in jeopardy.

As the project raises serious governance and financial questions, I hereby respectfully request that the Downtown Library Project be docketed at City Council for review and action for either termination or renewed authorization.

